

REVIEWS

Books on the Balkans Put Missions in Perspective

by Lieutenant Colonel Dan Zajac

Editor's Note: Lieutenant Colonel Zajac forwarded us the following list of books that he found useful during his assignment to Bosnia from December of 1995 to June of 1997. He said they are listed by utility and recommended reading order.

Bridge on the Drina by Ivo Andric. University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Nobel Literature Award Winner. An intense historical novel that spans a long period in Bosnian history, from the Turkish occupation until WWI. It was near unanimously recommended by Bosnian-Serbs, Moslems, and Croats alike. (No kidding, I asked them what book I should read to better understand them — if I could read only one.) This book captures the ethos/gestalt of Bosnia-Herzegovina better than any. It is a "must read" for anyone who really wants to understand.

If you like Ivo Andric's work, also try his *Bosnian Chronicle* (University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Yugoslavia - Death of a Nation by Laura Silber and Allen Little. TV/Penguin Books, 1996.

This is the best overall account of the conflict. It covers the break-up of Yugoslavia and the ensuing conflicts, from the late 1980s through the Dayton Peace Accords, and helps one to understand why we're in Bosnia today. This book ties in wonderfully with *The Death of Yugoslavia*, the five-part B.B.C. television series, which is available on video. Moreover, the video series brings to life all of the personalities in the book. The video and book are powerful indictments of Milosevic's guilt in starting the whole thing. Recently, the History Channel had Laura Silber do a short on the same topic — both videos would be great for training soldiers heading into the AOR.

Endgame — the Betrayal and Fall of Srebrenica: Europe's Worst Massacre Since World War II by David Rhode. FSG, 1997.

If you want to know what happened at Srebrenica, this is a must-read. Without doubt the most detailed and objective (despite a somewhat anti-U.N. and anti-Serb bent) account of the long lead-up and eventual demise of the Srebrenica "enclave." He captures the role of the French (U.N.) GEN Morillon, Naser Oric, and Muslim complicity better than any other work on the topic. I met Rhode as he was researching/writing the book, during 2d Bri-

gade, 1AD's war crimes-related missions in the Drina Valley. Rhode gets most of it right and only fails in his understanding of the extent of the U.S. Army's role in the investigations. We could not tell him, of course.

Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime by Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both, Penguin Books 1996.

This is a good book detailing the fall of Srebrenica and the origins of the pocket/enclave. Good detail on the role of Naser Oric and the Muslim side of the battle. Don't bother with this one if you read Rhode's book.

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon by Rebecca West. Penguin Books.

One woman's journey through Yugoslavia in the late 1930s, but don't let the publishing date deceive you. This book is relevant. A long read but a wonderful book for those really interested in the region. Many buy this book, but few read it due to the size. If you have the time and want to add depth to your understanding — read this book.

The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War by Misha Glenny, Penguin Books, 1996.

Another pretty objective account of the Yugoslav conflicts from the late '80s through Dayton. It helps one to understand why we're in Bosnia today. A quick read but not as comprehensive as *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*.

Balkan Ghosts by Robert D. Kaplan. Vintage Books, 1993.

Popularized when President Clinton noted that he had read it. Provides background on the peoples and motivations in the Balkans — a quick, interesting read, however it is a somewhat superficial and not nearly as scholarly as most of the other titles on this list. A lot of folks read this one and think they have it all figured out — big mistake.

Why Bosnia?: Writings on the Balkan War edited by Rabbi All & Lawre Lifeschutz, The Pamphleteer's Press Inc., Stony Creek, Conn., 1993.

An interesting compilation of articles on the conflict from international authors, decidedly pro-Muslim. Gives the reader a dose of the horror of the conflict as well as the pro-Muslim propaganda machine.

The Serbs: The Guardians of the Gate by R.G.D. Laffan, C.F., Dorset Press, New York, 1989.

Written by a pro-Serbian British officer during WWI. Biased, yes, but useful in helping to understand the Serb people and their fortress mentality, or as a Muslim linguist once told me, "the whole Serb thing."

Balkan Tragedy. Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War by Susan L. Woodward, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1995.

Good book that covers the conflict up through January 1995. Not the easiest read on this list. Heavier than the others on political-economic factors.

Seasons in Hell by Ed Vulliamy, Penguin Books, 1993.

Hard on the U.N. for ineptitude and on the West for failure to stop the fighting.

Hearts Grown Brutal: Sagas of Sarajevo by Roger Cohen. I haven't read this one yet, but I listened to the author in a lecture and question and answer period and the guy seems to have a lot of insights at the human level — very impressive. I plan to pick this one up soon. In addition, both Lord Owen and Richard Holbrook published new books in the last 12 months, however, I have not had the time to read them. Given the role they played, I'm sure they'd add a lot, but the macro view they would provide might not help a soldier at the pointy edge in Brcko, Zvornic, or Han Pijesak.

LTC Dan Zajac served as the G3, Operations of 1AD in Bad Kreuznach, deploying to Croatia and Bosnia in 1993 for recons. He assisted in planning for potential Bosnia deployment and planned/supervised execution of the 1st NATO/Partnership for Peace Exercise in Poland in September, 1994. In early 1995, he deployed to Kuwait for Intrinsic Action 95-4 as the Battalion S3, 2-68 Armor. From Dec '95-Jul '96, as the S3, 2d Bde, 1AD, he deployed to Bosnia for Operation Joint Endeavor. His next assignment was as aide de camp to the commander, V Corps (with travels to Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Hungary). In 1997-98, he served as the XO of 1st Bde, 3ID, Ft. Stewart, Ga., deploying to Egypt for Bright Star and Kuwait for Operation Desert Thunder. He is currently the commander of 3-69 Armor.